

CHALLENGES FACING  
AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY IN AFRICA TODAY:  
THE LEGACY OF SOMALIA FOR RWANDA AND  
BURUNDI

by

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As an historian specializing in the study of genocide and human rights, I bring my own particular perspective to today's presentation on the African challenges facing the Bush Administration and Congress. I am going to argue that combating crimes against humanity and their destabilizing indirect consequences rank with the problems of AIDS and malaria as the most fundamental challenges facing American foreign policy in Africa today. Yes, trade with Africa, American access to Africa's natural resources, fostering integrated economic development and strengthening civil society in Africa will test the ingenuity and determination of Africans and American policy makers, but looming over all of these will be the challenge of fighting crimes against humanity and their ripple effects on the vast African continent.

## GENOCIDE

Let us remember that genocide, the most extreme crime against humanity, is the crime of destroying or seeking to destroy, with malice and forethought, whether in whole or in part, an ethnic, national, racial or religious group. Conclusive demonstration of the intent of the perpetrator, what lawyers call the "criminal mind" or the "mens rea," is vital to securing the conviction of persons for acts of genocide, attempted genocide, conspiracy to commit genocide, direct and public incitement of genocide through hate propaganda, and complicity in genocide. Genocide is a deliberate act whose huge scale generally requires the guiding and coordinating hand of a government or a well-organized force. (Schabas, Chapter 5.)

## THE MOTIVES OF PERPETRATORS OF GENOCIDE

Students of genocide and its prevention need to be interested in the motives of its perpetrators. Throughout history, from ancient times to the present, perpetrators of genocide have exhibited four basic motives, sometimes only one at a time and sometimes in various combinations. (Chalk and Jonassohn, pp. 29-32.) The motives for genocide are:

1. To eliminate a real or potential threat;
2. To spread terror among real or potential enemies;
3. To acquire economic wealth; and
4. To implement a belief, a theory, or an ideology.

#### THE FUNDAMENTAL CAUSES OF GENOCIDE IN CONTEMPORARY AFRICA

As the genocides in Burundi and Rwanda of 1972 and 1994 demonstrated, genocide in Africa has six fundamental, root causes, each of which impinges on the roles of ideology, propaganda and political expediency (Evans, 22-24; Gasana, 8-14; Lemarchand, 8-9):

1. Demographic overload, with populations far in excess of land and other resources;
2. A high rate of unemployment among young men due to falling world prices for agricultural products and resource-starved education systems;
3. Ready access to modern and traditional weapons;
4. An atmosphere of fear and insecurity, especially the fear of becoming a victim of genocide or of being dominated by another ethnic group;
5. Large numbers of internally displaced persons and refugees churned up by civil disturbances and wars; and
6. Impunity for the perpetrators of crimes against humanity with few, if any, attempts to apply the principles of restorative justice to past genocides.

Demographic overload, more people than the economy will support under existing domestic and international economic conditions, was especially important in setting the stage for the genocides in Burundi and Rwanda. The Rwandan economy went into a tailspin in June 1989 with the disintegration of the International Coffee Agreement under attacks from Washington and the collapse of world coffee prices. Seventy-five percent of Rwanda's foreign earnings came from coffee exports. Youth unemployment soared and school leavers could not find work. Let us remember, too, that in Rwanda, which was 62 percent Catholic, "the Church controlled 80 per cent of health clinics and contraception was forbidden." (Malvern, p. 40) The situation in Rwanda in the early 1990s reminds one of Kosovo in March 1999, where 70 percent of the population was under 30, the birth rate was the highest in Europe, and where 70 percent of the population was unemployed, producing a large pool of disenchanting young people from which the Kosovo Liberation Army recruited. (Hedges)



## THE CLINTON ADMINISTRATION AND AFRICA

One of the saddest ironies of the past eight years is that the Clinton Administration brought more commitment, energy, and enthusiasm to relations with Africa than any administration in the history of the United States. Although its record includes successes as well as failures, the Bush Administration must learn the important lessons of President Bill Clinton's African disasters if it is to succeed with any of its African initiatives.

## THE RWANDA GENOCIDE OF 1994 AND THE LEGACY OF SOMALIA

President Clinton and his advisors emerged from the Somalia experience of 1993 believing that they had learned three crucial macro lessons:

1. Never change the mandate in midstream of a UN or US force in Africa.
2. Avoid involvement in large, multinational military missions because such forces are hard to coordinate due to their broad spectrum of training and weapons, as well as the tendency of their sponsors to micromanage their forces in opposite directions.
3. Do not participate in any future UN-managed peacekeeping interventions because of rampant and uncontrollable infighting and rivalry among UN departments. (Howe)

Any one of these macro lessons would have been enough to constrain the Clinton Administration's response to the Rwanda genocide, but the Administration also learned from Somalia a number of micro lessons whose impact on the US decision not to intervene in Rwanda was just as important as the three I have just elaborated.

1. It is harder and takes more time to disengage from a humanitarian mission than you anticipate.
2. You may win militarily, but you lose politically when you are seen to be killing civilian members of the population you came to help.
3. The American public wants few US casualties and insists on American generals being in charge of operations involving American troops. Or, put more succinctly, as my friend Professor Ken Campbell phrases it, "No casualties' trumps 'Never again.'" (Campbell)
4. UN peacekeeping missions fail if they are orphaned by leading members.
5. Interventions on humanitarian grounds change the stakes of power, sometimes fuel conflicts and may alter the local balance of power by arousing nationalist reactions. (Crocker, Howe, and Allard)

According to George Stephanopoulos, President Clinton's communications director and advisor during the Somalia débacle, the president's immediate reaction to the attack on American soldiers was to fight back:

"We're not inflicting pain on these fuckers," Clinton said, softly at first. "When people kill us, they should be killed in greater numbers." Then, with his face reddening, his voice rising, and his fist pounding his thigh, he leaned into Tony [Lake] as if it were his fault: "I believe in killing people who try to hurt you, and I can't believe we're being pushed around by these two-bit pricks."  
(Stephanopoulos, 214)

But, Stephanopoulos tells us, Clinton quickly fell back on political instincts honed by his understanding of United States' history and the mood in Congress:

Congress would vote to "bring the boys home" while attacking Clinton for causing a humiliating American defeat. Retreating under fire would also end a humanitarian intervention that had saved thousands from starvation. So far, the public had supported our presence in Somalia, but Clinton believed opinion would turn fast at the sight of body bags. "Americans are basically isolationist," he said then. "They understand at a basic gut level Henry Kissinger's vital-interest argument. Right now the average American doesn't see our interest threatened to the point where we should sacrifice one American life." (Stephanopoulos, 214)

Clinton's dilemma, says Stephanopoulos, was that in Somalia, as in Bosnia and Haiti, "we were caught between critics who said we should use American power for humanitarian purposes and those who insisted that 'we can't be the world's policeman' so we shouldn't even try." Clinton agreed with columnist William Safire that "part of America's 'new impotence is the unwillingness of too many Americans to expend blood and treasure' beyond our borders," but he despaired of trying to change the mind of the American public as a hopeless task. The best Clinton could do was to announce that he would withdraw American troops from Somalia in six months and thus fend off a Congressional resolution demanding an immediate end to the intervention there. Accepting the view propounded by David Gergen, a former Reagan advisor hired to enhance Clinton's public image, in private conversations the embarrassed President now blamed his security advisors for giving him bad advice and leading him into broadening the goals of the United States intervention in Somalia. (Stephanopoulos, 215)

Today, we know very well the consequences which arose from President Clinton and his advisors applying the lessons of the Somalia intervention. The United States successfully opposed at the UN granting General Romeo Dallaire more proactive rules of engagement for UN forces in Rwanda prior to the start of the genocide and it, together with other Western powers, discouraged the reinforcement of the troops at his disposal once the genocide began. Hundreds of thousands of Tutsi were butchered, as were many Hutu opponents of the Habyarimana government. Moreover, the permanent members of the Security Council then permitted the Hutu refugee camps in Zaire to become training



and staging bases for cross border attacks on Rwanda, convincing Paul Kagame in November 1996 to launch a combined operation that succeeded in emptying the refugee camps and, in May 1997, brought Laurent Kabila to power in the Congo. (Des Forges)

The ultimate collapse of the collaboration between Kabila and his sponsors in Rwanda and Uganda led to renewed fighting and the intervention in the Democratic Republic of the Congo of more African armies from bordering states. This, in turn, has allowed a number of the senior officers of some of these armies to divert diamonds, gold, and other natural resources to their own enrichment and to that of their home governments. In the process, the DRC and its invaders seem to be headed down the same road pioneered by President Charles Taylor of Liberia and Sierra Leone's Revolutionary United Front. (Reno)

As political scientist William Reno has insightfully pointed out, following their 1997 electoral victory, "Taylor and his associates have used their control over the Liberian state to continue a wartime strategy of profiting from commerce related to warfare in Sierra Leone, Liberia's western neighbor." (Reno, 15) As criminal networks multiply among officers in the armies and militias of Uganda, Zimbabwe, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Angola and other African countries, Reno fears that "Ultimately, this development would deprive state rulers of control over violence and pose the danger that military factions would fight each other over the spoils of war." (Reno, 9-10) Reno is right, and the Bush Administration has inherited as a legacy of the Clinton years a growing number of weakened African states dominated by violent commercial organizations and networks. This development was not inevitable, as he pointed out. It depended on "the political choices of individual leaders, their identification of opportunities in a crisis management context, and their success in recruiting outsiders with resources to aid their regimes." (Reno, 18) The American flight from Somalia sent a clear message to African despots and aspiring warlords: the United States will cut and run if it suffers casualties in Africa; it will not intervene militarily if it perceives that casualties among its troops are likely.

#### "TOUGH LOVE" MEETS BURUNDI

The narrow, national interest approach to policy followed by the Clinton Administration in Rwanda following on its refusal to educate the American public about the need to remain in Somalia had unexpected and disastrous consequences. After the killing of 10 Belgian paratroopers in Kigali, when General Romeo Dallaire was calling for the dispatch of reinforcements to stop the genocide already underway, the United States argued in informal meetings of the United Nations Security Council for the withdrawal from Rwanda of all UN peacekeeping troops. (Malevern, 116, and Morris) Near the end of April, two weeks after the genocide began, the Security Council authorized Dallaire to retain a force level of 270 men. In the case of Burundi today, as in the case of Rwanda in 1994, the President and Congress face the challenge of another ethnically polarized society, one intimately linked to Rwanda by history, language and culture, and one whose problems once more pose the question to the United States, "Should we get deeply involved in preventing genocides and mass crimes in Africa or



should we limit our investment of money and lives to global order issues, such as maintaining the sanctity of national borders and the extension of the Star Wars program?"

As the Bush Administration embarks on its first one hundred days in office, the consensus among the permanent members of the UN Security Council is that the people of Burundi hold their fate in their own hands and it is they who must decide what direction they will take, the road to yet another genocide or the road to reconstruction and renewal. The attitude of the United States is that private investors will only risk their money in countries that establish a climate of trust and security. The United States, Canada, and the countries of the European Union are willing to help if the leaders and people of Burundi are willing to provide the necessary modicum of security. If they are not, that is just too bad. Africans are seen as sitting in the driver's seat. Sharing these attitudes, former President Mandela of South Africa told the delegates to the Arusha conference on a peace accord for Burundi in so many words: "You are the leaders. Demonstrate to the world that you are the kind of leaders I think you are. Remember the past, but think about a better future." (Mandela and telephone interview with senior Canadian official, Ottawa, 29 November 2000)

Central to the current policy, with its emphasis on "tough love," is the idea that Africans should decide what they want to do to and create conditions attractive to private investors. Once that is done, donors from outside their countries can assist them with funds and know-how to achieve their goals and to build up their capacity. If the Bush Administration pursues this approach, it will position itself as respecting the views of African leaders while negotiating compacts with those leaders to achieve mutually agreed on goals.

How realistic is the "tough love" approach? Is it wiser than coercive intervention? Burundi is a country of horrendous massacres and extreme ethnic polarization. Large scale killings took place in 1965 and 1967, followed by the genocide of 1972 and the terrible events of October 1993, when President Ndadaye, the first democratically elected Hutu president of Burundi, and his cabinet ministers, were assassinated by paratroopers from the army of Burundi, and retaliatory killings against Tutsi and Hutu were staged in many parts of the country. It was the reversal of the fortunes of the Rwanda Tutsi and their persecution between 1959 and 1963 that had spurred a group of Tutsi army officers to commit genocide in Burundi by selectively murdering between 100,000 and 300,000 educated Hutu in 1972. To prevent the Hutu from sharing power, they killed all Hutu army officers, civil servants, doctors, nurses, priests, bank clerks, businessmen, shopkeepers, drivers, teachers, and students. A whole generation of educated Hutu was murdered. (UN, Economic and Social Council, Deng Report, 6) No one was ever punished for the killings of 1972 or of 1993. Ultimately, the 1972 genocide and successive waves of retaliatory killings in the 1980s and 1990s produced extreme ethnic polarization in Burundi and fed the radicalization of the conflict in Rwanda. By 1991, 240,000 Hutu had fled from Burundi to refugee camps in Tanzania and elsewhere. After the October 1993 massacres, 700,000 persons left Burundi. (UN, Economic and Social Council, Deng Report, 4; Evans, 21-22)



The United Nations and the permanent members of the Security Council responded to the Burundi crisis in 1993 with a flurry of activities that masked their determination to never commit their own troops to solving the problem. A host of foreign governments volunteered mediators. Ould Abdallah, the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG), is said to have thrown up his hands in disgust and resigned when the number of interfering negotiators reached seven in 1995. (Evans, 88, note 8)

Behind the refusal to support UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali's proposals for international military intervention in Burundi was the idea, articulated by Glynne Evans of the United Kingdom Foreign Office, that it was common sense which prevailed, not failure of political will. "In an internal conflict with a high degree of ethnic mobilisation," she writes, "the choice is between taking sides and backing a winner--which will allow for a swift exit--or a major long-term commitment if the mandate is to be even-handed and protect civilians at risk." In Burundi, the potential interveners concluded, says Evans, that "In violent domestic strife where there are no effective security forces, the intervener effectively takes over the role of the state and cannot leave until the state can provide that capability itself." (Evans, 72) Under these conditions, I would add, that the United States, Britain, and other leading countries indeed evinced their strong political will--the will to not get involved beyond the negotiation table and the check book.

The Western powers refusal to deploy large numbers of troops to Burundi cripples the chances for peace. It threatens to convert the approach of the Western powers from "tough love" to "tough luck." Observer missions cannot do the job, as Glynne Evans emphasizes:

Short of a powerful Western-led force prepared to confront and disarm all sources of violence, a small and lightly armed force dependent on the consent of all parties would have been held hostage by the [Burundi] army, unable to assert its right to move freely, and to protect the civilian population. Faced with this army hostility, the foreign force would have become too easily aligned with the Hutu cause. (Evans, 54-55)

UN Under-Secretary-General James Jonah summarized the problem facing advocates of a major commitment of UN peacemaking troops to Burundi thus: "We are now realising that government's aren't prepared to take casualties except in their own national interest." (Evans, 55)

Following the signing of the Arusha Accord for Peace and Reconciliation in Burundi on 28 August 1999, President Clinton reiterated the West's "tough love" approach in a speech at Simba Hall. "[N]o one can force peace; you must choose it," he told the delegates, continuing "if you choose peace, the United States and the world community will be there to help you make it pay off . . . We will help you to create the



economic and social conditions essential to a sustainable peace--from agricultural development to child immunization, to the prevention of AIDS." Clinton spoke eloquently, pleading with the delegates: "You have to help your children remember their history, but you must not force them to relive their history." (Clinton)

Clinton, the World Bank and the European Union held out the carrot of massive foreign aid to the delegates from Burundi if they would implement the peace accord. But they were unwilling to fashion or threaten the use of a stick. Stephen Stedman attributes the failure of the Arusha Accords for Rwanda in 1994 to the emergence of spoilers who only stood to gain from blowing up the peace process. He concludes that a credible threat of armed intervention to contain spoiler groups potentiates and makes more effective the use of the carrot. (Stedman) The threat of the stick as well as the offer of a carrot is essential if the peaceful resolution of highly polarized ethnic conflicts in societies like Burundi's is to succeed. Force will probably not be required, but the spoilers must believe that it is available and will be used unless they cooperate.

So, what should the Bush Administration do about Burundi? As a first step, it might ask the South African Defense Forces to place elite units on standby-alert for fast deployment to Burundi if any attempt is made to stage a Rwanda-like destruction of the peace process. Former President Mandela, President Thabo Mbeki and the Government of South Africa could have one more sacrifice to make. Yet the involvement of South African forces in Burundi could create other problems, which I will discuss below. The International Crisis Group has already called on the Security Council "to order rapid intervention should violence escalate on the ground . . . ." It has also asked that "Strong measures . . . be applied against those who threaten the peace process, such as the freezing of their bank accounts, the refusal of visas for their travel and the issue of international arrest warrants for prosecution of their crimes." (International Crisis Group; also see UN, Economic and Social Council, Deng Report, parag. 119) These sticks are thin, but they can hurt. An announcement by the United States and its allies in the Burundi peace process that they would place Burundi under an international trusteeship should elements of the Burundi armed forces attempt to stage another coup d'état would be the most effective means of securing the conditions required for the implementation of a peace agreement.

## RECONSTRUCTING GENOCIDE AND POST-GENOCIDE SOCIETIES: THE EXAMPLE OF BURUNDI

### 1. Education

Equal access to education is vital to the reconstruction of Burundi's unequal society. Tony Jackson's study of the state of education shows that "Exclusion [in Burundi] begins with differential access to education." The Tutsi minority maintains its dominance over the army, the judiciary, the senior civil service and business through measures aimed at denying higher education to Hutu students. The remedy is not to diminish access to education by Tutsi, but to enlarge the educational opportunities of



Hutu and Twa. The donor community must do this. Thirty-six percent of the adults living in Burundi are illiterate. An estimated 800,000 Burundians are internally displaced persons, including 77,000 children of school-age, or about one in eight of the school population. Due to the conflict, the number of children in school, the number of teachers, and the number of viable school buildings is dropping steadily every year. School fees must be lowered, with help from the international donors, to raise the rate of participation in schooling, especially for girls, who now constitute a small percentage of the students. (Jackson, 7, 8, 25-31)

## 2. Information

Radio is the most popular and accessible source of news in Burundi. Hate radio stations broadcasting from mobile transmitters in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and using the same hate propaganda techniques employed by the notorious RTLM in Rwanda should be eliminated by military action, if necessary. Radio Democracy, one such hate station, broadcast with a mobile transmitter until 1996, when its sponsor, the Conseil national pour la defense de la democratie (CNDD), lost its rear bases to the advance of Laurent Kabila's Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (ADFL). (United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs) New hate radio stations emerged in the Democratic Republic of the Congo as Kabila abandoned his old alliance with Rwanda and Uganda to support Burundi Hutu paramilitary groups based in his country.

International donors should expand their support for Studio Ijambo (i.e. Wise Words, in Kirundi), whose brilliant mixed Hutu/Tutsi production teams in Burundi present daily installments of a soap opera, "Our Neighbors, Ourselves," listened to by an enormous slice of the population (87 percent in the three provinces surveyed). An estimated 24 percent of the population listens to Studio Ijambo's news programs. Produced by Search for Common Ground, a Washington-based organization headed by John Marks (co-author of the 1974 exposé, *The CIA and the Cult of Intelligence*), Studio Ijambo is funded with grants from the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the US Agency for International Development, the British and Swiss Governments, the UN Development Program, and the Open Society Institute (Soros). (Burundi: Courage)

## 3. Security and the Military

The Government of Burundi spends 40 percent of its budget on defense and 21 percent on education. (Jackson, 32) In the current conflict, civilians, not soldiers, are overwhelmingly the chief victims. Typically, the insurgency and its repression are waged by soldiers attacking civilians belonging to the other ethnic group or killing members of their own ethnic group who are suspected of not cooperating with them. A gradual integration of Hutu soldiers and officers into the armed forces and police is essential to the successful implementation of the peace accords. (United Nations, Economic and Social Council, Deng Report) The Bush Administration will need to assign US military



personnel to the training of these new troops, and Congress should provide funds to compensate the Defense Department for these efforts.

#### 4. Development and Aid

The World Bank, the European Union and the United States have already pledged millions of dollars in aid to Burundi if the parties cease killing each other and adhere to the peace accords. (Clinton, European Union) Vital to the success of the international aid effort will be monitoring and assessment to ensure that aid does not cement existing divisions through unequal support of inputs and services or through the recruitment of staff and the granting of rewards to only one ethnic group. It is especially important in Burundi, where the province of Bururi is differentially favored over all others in education and the production of army officers, that aid should be equitably spread throughout the regions of Burundi. (Jackson, 21, 26, 28)

#### THE TOOLS OF POST-GENOCIDE RECONSTRUCTION

Essential to the success of post-genocide reconstruction is the deployment of six tools (Leonhardt):

1. Conflict analysis, aimed at identifying the root causes of conflict, an assessment of conflict trends and peace opportunities.
2. Stakeholder analysis, identifying the key stakeholders and evaluating their capacities for working towards peace.
3. The Choice of Strategic Objectives and Instruments, including development and trade cooperation, plus financial, diplomatic and military instruments.
4. Drawing Up A Country Strategy, including a staged and realistic time frame.
5. Risk Assessment, based on consultation with the major stakeholders to identify and mitigate potential conflict risks.
6. The Selection of Conflict Indicators for Monitoring and Evaluation, including attention to the unintended effects of aid on the local peace situation.

#### COERCIVE PREVENTION

Necessary to the success of pregenocide prevention and postgenocide reconstruction is a willingness on the part of the United States to engage in coercive prevention. By "coercive prevention" Bruce Jentleson, its foremost exponent among American political scientists, means early action to prevent conflict and demonstration of a willingness to employ coercive instruments, especially military force, without excluding other means of coercion such as economic sanctions, diplomatic instruments, and other

coercive measures. (Jentleson, 9-11) The people of the United States and the members of Congress need to be educated about the importance of coercive prevention if they are to appropriate the defense dollars needed to implement it. Donald Rumsfeld's sweeping review of long-term United States military strategy and the capacity of the armed forces to implement it, ordered by President Bush on 31 January 2001, provides a welcome opportunity for a reassessment of American military strategy that could lead to increased funding of coercive prevention initiatives by the United States and its allies. It is also worth mentioning here that a major and often ignored reason for the Pentagon's reluctance to engage in peacemaking operations at the time of the genocide in Rwanda was the bizarre arrangement whereby the Defense Department paid for peacekeeping operations, but the funds received from the United Nations to compensate the United States for such expenses were credited to the State Department's budget. (Interview with a senior source.) Given this history, at a time when overseas US forces sometimes lack proper housing and military pay is so low that some low ranking soldiers and their families have had to go on welfare, the Joint Chiefs of Staff's opposition to new peacemaking initiatives is understandable. This situation must be remedied as a prerequisite to developing credible United States policies in Africa.

A more fundamental reason for White House and Congressional opposition to long-term peacemaking efforts is the belief, mistaken in my view, that they do not serve American interests and that the public strongly opposes them. The United States has significant interests in Africa: first of all, because local problems can explode into regional problems that begin to hurt, just as they have recently in Central Africa and West Africa; second, because it would be a big mistake to neglect a continent four times larger than the United States and possessed of 53 different states, many with enormous natural resources and huge potential markets for American products; and third, because humanitarian interests and expansion of democracy are key American concerns in the post-Cold War era. (See "Chester Crocker, Richard Moose and Herman Cohen.") Moreover, study after study of public attitudes shows that the American public is strongly committed to US armed intervention to save civilian lives and advance humanitarian ends. There is no enduring Somalia syndrome among the American public. (Jentleson, 24-28)

The classical geopolitical strategists' argument, summarized by Jentleson, is that "much of the 1990s agenda, however morally commendable, fails the basic realist calculus of interests (too low), costs (too high), and options (too few)." Jentleson rebuts this perspective, arguing that the "realist" view "underestimates the interests at stake; it overestimates the costs of acting early compared with acting late; [and] it miscalculates options that narrow rather than stay open over time." The realist argument that the United States has no significant interests in a country unless it is raw material rich or strategically vital is too static, contends Jentleson, principally because "the more the conflicts intensify the more important the issues and places often become." (Jentleson, p. 11.)

An old Chinese proverb says: "It is difficult to borrow money to buy medicine, but easy to borrow money to purchase a coffin." American policy towards Burundi, Rwanda,



East Timor, Bosnia, and other human rights disasters bears out this insight. We are reluctant to commit troops early enough to prevent genocides and gross violations of human rights because we anticipate high financial costs, and thereby we incur even greater costs caring for refugees after the disaster has happened. We fail to understand that problems become more complicated when they are left to fester. As conflicts intensify, it becomes harder for local leaders to advocate moderate solutions, and their constituents swiftly fall prey to calls for revenge. As Jentleson points out, "Preventing a conflict from escalating to violence is a more limited objective than ending violence once it has begun." (Jentleson, p. 13.)

## THE POLICY CHOICES WE FACE

It is already clear that General Colin L. Powell, the new Secretary of State, will play a decisive role in determining United States foreign policy towards Africa. It is probably no accident that General Powell made the Africa Bureau his first stop on his get-acquainted tour of the State Department. Jane Perlez has speculated in the *New York Times* that Powell will single out Nigeria and South Africa as powerful states that should play a larger role in African peacekeeping missions. Providing them with more American military assistance under the State Department's African Crisis Response Initiative might help them to perform such a role effectively. (Perlez, "Powell Gives Africa A Hard New Look," Hooks, and O'Hanlon) Such an approach by Powell would be in keeping with the views of Bush foreign policy advisor Dov Zakheim and Condoleezza Rice, the new National Security Advisor, who prefer to rely on regional forces as peacekeepers, while the American armed forces provide "intelligence, airlift, command and control, but not ground troops." (Traub, p. 32)

But building up Nigeria and South Africa to serve as American surrogates in Africa raises three key issues: 1) are the Nigerian armed forces truly capable of respecting human rights in other countries before they have learned to do so at home? The record of Nigerian soldiers in the Niger Delta, and in Liberia and Sierra Leone peacemaking suggests otherwise (Human Rights Watch; also see Harden); 2) can South Africa play an important role in African peacekeeping if it is not ready to rein in its arms industry's sales to predatory African regimes? Its sales to Habyarimana before the Rwanda genocide of 20,000 R-4 assault rifles, 10,000 hand grenades, machine guns, and 1.5 million rounds of ammunition for the R-4 rifles makes this an important question, as does President Mbeki's rejection of an independent audit and his dismissal of a judge who headed the commission responsible for an investigation of South Africa's purchase of \$5.5 billion worth of warships, fighter planes and other weapons when he refused to surrender evidence to him (Malvern, 66; Jeter); and 3) can the United States lead from the rear? British foreign policy analysts have already concluded that having European troops on the ground and Americans not present on the ground was an unsatisfactory approach to peacekeeping in Bosnia, and one that Britain will never repeat. (Traub, p. 32) Anecdotal evidence from Kenya and other African countries indicates that little is accomplished in human rights or peacekeeping until the United States takes the lead. President Yoweri Museveni has mocked suggestions that Western troops will actually enter the conflict in

the Democratic Republic of the Congo, asking in July 1999: "Which U.N. troops will stay in these mountains for six months? They will just run away like they did in Rwanda. European soldiers go only to areas where there is no death." (McNeil, "Bombing Won")

The new Administration enters office with a publicly declared proclivity not to engage in humanitarian intervention. Candidate George W. Bush told Sam Donaldson in January 1999 that "if another Rwanda occurred on his watch, he would not send American troops, though he would speak with the United Nations and 'encourage them to move.'" Journalist James Traub calls this "not far from saying, 'It's none of our business.'" (Traub, p. 33) Dov Zakheim says that the United States should intervene "only when our own interests are clearly at stake, or when genocide is so manifest that refusal to act would destroy our moral leadership of the free world." (Traub, p. 33) Traub interprets this to mean "if we can preserve our moral leadership without acting in the face of genocide, that's fine." He concludes that "The Zakheim Doctrine brings moral considerations about as close to zero as humanly possible." (Traub, p. 33)

Analysts who look to General Powell as an advocate of using American troops when the human rights chips are down may be in for a disappointment. Traub reminds us that Powell "played a major role in preventing the Clinton administration from acting in Bosnia in 1993 . . . . He was convinced that the Balkans were Vietnam redux." (Traub, p. 33) Powell even opposed the Gulf War in which oil was major factor, arguing, asserts Traub, that "we would suffer hundreds or even thousands of deaths in Iraq, and that the American people would never accept casualties to keep the price of oil down." (Ibid.)

Finally, the Bush Administration and Congress will be paying careful attention to the highly respected views of Marina Ottaway, a Senior Associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. In an important article published in December 1999, Ottaway decried the Clinton Administration's "far-reaching ambition to remake African countries into accountable and transparent modern democracies respectful of human rights, with free market systems open to the global economy." Precisely because the United States and other powers had few crucial "economic and security interests" in Africa, she charges, the Clinton Administration pursued a mythical vision of what Africa could become "rather than developing a policy to address in a realistic manner the problems that exist now." (Ottaway, "Less Is Better")

Ottaway urges the next Administration to summon the courage and determination to resist the demands of single-interest non-governmental organizations and to formulate "a far more modest set of goals" in Africa. She abjures "peace plans that require the deployment of unavailable peacekeepers or economic reforms that will only bear fruit if accompanied by foreign investment that is unlikely to materialize . . . ." (Ibid.) "Even if more countries were willing to supply troops," she argues, "there would never be enough peacekeepers to saturate Africa's vast conflict areas as the international community did in Bosnia and Kosovo." Today's military missions "are far too small to do the job," she insists, pointing to the example of the Democratic Republic of the Congo "where current plans call for the deployment of 5,500 monitors and peacekeepers in a country larger than



the United States east of the Mississippi, torn by interlocking conflicts that involve nine African countries and at least a dozen Congolese and foreign rebel groups.” (Ibid.)

Ottaway concludes that abandoning the “grand solution” approach—“conflict resolution through negotiations that restore peace, maintain the unity of the country in its colonial borders, and transform it into a modern democracy”—would free the United States to adopt a set of more limited practical and realistic goals in Africa. Four approaches to conflict provide the core of her proposal for a new United States policy in Africa: 1) make the cessation of conflict, not finding a definitive solution, the first priority; 2) avoid peace agreements that depend on the deployment of peacekeepers; 3) consider new ways to restore peace, “including partition of a country, population movements, and nondemocratic but reasonably competent governments;” and 4) tolerate ambiguous situations if they succeed in maintaining peace “such as the existence of autonomous entities and informal political arrangements . . . such as the city-states that are developing in Somalia.” (Ibid.)

Ottaway admits that her proposals come with a high cost of their own. “The real problem with the policy advocated here,” she concedes, “is its impact on the populations of the collapsing states and the countries at war—the civilians caught in the conflicts and the millions of refugees and internally displaced people.” She confesses that the policy she advocates “would do nothing for them in the short run,” but, she argues, “present policies are not helping these populations either.” For the time being, Ottaway proposes, “it is only humanitarian assistance that can alleviate, at least a little, the plight of the populations affected by war.” (Ibid.) That an analyst as experienced and sensitive to human rights concerns as Marina Ottaway would offer proposals such as these is a measure of her profound disillusionment with Clinton’s African policy and her pessimism about generating fundamental changes in Africa.

Ottaway’s views stand in marked contrast to my own. The critics of coercive prevention overestimate how frequently force would have to be used by the United States once it had demonstrated in Africa its willingness to sustain casualties in combat and its ability to stay the course. They underestimate the cost of American inaction now, just as they did before and during the Rwanda genocide. They pay too little attention to the successes that have resulted from American pressure on regimes in Ghana, Kenya and other African states to hold fair elections, tolerate the growth of civil society, and reduce their human rights abuses. (Barkan) And they fall prey to the “Vietmalia syndrome,” assuming too readily that the failure of United States intervention in Vietnam and Somalia were the same. I have pled guilty to the charge of at last one American general that I was a “B-52 liberal,” an opponent of the war in Vietnam who is now an advocate of U.S. military intervention to promote human rights in Africa. In Vietnam, the United States faced a Communist-led nationalist movement that recruited peasants with proposals for dramatic land reform and liberation from colonialism. In Somalia, as in Burundi today, the real issue is the liberation from terror and exploitation of millions of African civilians and refugees abused by poorly organized men lightly armed with automatic rifles, machine guns, grenades and machetes. Caught in the middle and

unarmed, these civilians are no more capable of responding to the “tough love” remedies offered by the United States today than are the citizens of an American neighborhood terrorized by armed thugs until the police arrive and begin to assist them.

Today, the citizens of Burundi need American and European Union military and police help, not endless rounds of mediation and negotiation that lead nowhere while the delegates to the peace talks bask in their generous per diem payments and the killing of innocent civilians mounts weekly by the hundreds. Donald McNeil Jr., a reporter for the *New York Times* who has covered both the genocide in Rwanda and the effort to reconstruct Kosovo, raises the possibility that the inability of most Americans to identify with Africans, as opposed to Europeans, plays a major role in the reluctance of the United States and NATO to commit themselves seriously to humanitarian intervention in Africa. McNeil observes that “when it comes to attracting attention, white-skinned suffering just seems to have more bite than brown-skinned suffering.” (McNeil, “The World Comforts the Forgotten”) “I am convinced,” he wrote in January, “that one of the chief reasons NATO’s members mustered the political will to bomb Serbia is that the refugees streaming over the borders into Albania and Macedonia, with their head scarves and mule-drawn wagons, looked so much like the old World War II newsreels. It was easy to believe that a new Holocaust was on. By contrast, one stream of Africans with head bundles looks much like another. One seldom hears the individual stories that humanize them.” (Ibid.)

McNeil argues that it is our expectations that lead us to accept the preventable deaths of African children as normal, while the deaths of European children under similar circumstances shock us. He tells the story of finding that:

thousands of children who were infected with the virus that causes AIDS during the Ceausescu regime are now dying because they cannot get anti-retroviral cocktails. After two years of paying astronomical drug prices, Romania had bungled its budget and run out of money. And I immediately had an unworthy thought: Oh boy! After years of covering AIDS in Africa, where millions of children haven’t a prayer of getting the same drugs—not to mention the children dying of curable things like sleeping sickness or malaria—I finally get to write about white kids with AIDS. Now we’ll see what happens. And it did. Offers to help buy drugs for those poor white children have poured in. One even came from a woman who grew up in Calcutta. These children are different, she said, because poverty and sickness are a way of life in India, her homeland, and children are not shielded from it—but these Romanian children are having their innocence destroyed. (Ibid.)

European children are seen as deserving victims who require help; African children are not.

In a seminal article published in 1992, political scientist Aristide Zolberg pointed out that at the end of 1990 Africa had nearly five million refugees, nearly one-third of the



world's total. Virtually all of these displaced persons were "victims of violent conflicts in sovereign African states." What these African states had in common, apart from their ethnic homogeneity, Zolberg argued, was that they could all be described as "weak predatory states." But this was a characteristic they shared with the rest of sub-Saharan Africa. Generally speaking, Zolberg concluded, "all such states hover on the brink of disaster; whether or not they go over the edge depends on circumstances, especially the emergence of a sinister syndrome found in all the cases considered: a coincidence of tyranny with external military patronage." (Zolberg) As resources shrink and authoritarian rulers degenerate into kleptocratic tyrants, Zolberg contended, ethnic exclusiveness becomes the basic justification of the rulers and a disaggregation of rulers and ruled into primary solidarity groups vying with each other for weapons and food reduces life to a struggle for survival. "The process," Zolberg proposed, "fosters the emergence of a warlord system, as in seventeenth-century Germany or China at the beginning of the twentieth, verging on a murderous Hobbesian war of all against all." (Zolberg) The rise of ethnically based predatory states, not so-called "tribalism," was the greatest danger to the lives of contemporary Africans, Zolberg suggested. And the best ways to meet this threat, he concluded, were "an enduring commitment from the international community to assist in the political reconstruction of destroyed countries, to provide protection against nefarious intruders in vulnerable regions, and even to intervene directly should the state take on a completely pathological character." (Zolberg)

I have no time in this paper to seriously address the fundamental causes of the rise of the weak predatory state, but we must acknowledge that no long term solutions to Africa's current problems can succeed without the introduction of four key policies by African and more prosperous states: 1) new measures to expand markets for African goods in overseas markets; 2) more extensive introduction of birth control education to help Africans plan the size of their families and to protect them from the ravages of AIDS; 3) more public education, especially for women; and 4) carefully controlled reduction of the debts owed by African states with maximum repayment from the Swiss and other hidden bank accounts of those members of the African political elite who swindled their countries out of billions of dollars of development loan money.

The prevention of genocide and post-genocide reconstruction are much harder than rocket science, but they are not beyond the human imagination. We can make mistakes in the service of peacemaking. We must approach the problem thoughtfully and with care, but early coercive preventive action to prevent genocides and their multiplier effects is more cost efficient than picking up the pieces after the débacle. The pursuit of coercive prevention will take a willingness to level with the public and to educate it about the realities of peacekeeping and peacemaking. I admit that a major issue for all of us is "how to restrain the demands for intervention to a level that the international community can realistically hope to meet." (See Laurenti)

Many in Congress and the Bush Administration are interested in these problems and those who are not, by force of circumstances, soon will be. James Traub reminds us that not too many years ago President George Bush, that is the older President Bush, and

General Colin Powell could speak of a new partnership of nations “whose goals are to increase democracy” and of American troops as “warriors of freedom . . . who are prepared to die for its preservation” and “to help fulfill the concepts of the United Nations Charter.” (Traub, p. 34) I agree with Traub that it is “almost incredible that, only a decade later, that faith in the moral purposes of American power could come to seem so softheaded, so ill suited to the real world. Perhaps the old language, in retrospect, was too big; but the new language is very, very small.” I want to leave you with the question posed by Traub at the end of his essay and the hope that we can discuss it this afternoon: “Has the world changed so very much since then? Or is it we who have changed?” (Ibid.)



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